Agricultural Indebtedness under the Chairmanship of Prof.R. Radhakrishna. The Expert Group has pointed out that the underlying causes of agricultural indebtedness are stagnation in agriculture, production and marketing risks, institutional vacuum and lack of alternative livelihood opportunities in term of off-farm employment. The recommendations of the Expert Group can be categorized under the following five major heads:

(i) Immediate Credit Measures

(ii) Financial Architecture

(iii) Institutional Architecture

(iv) Risk Mitigation Measures

(v) Other Measures

2. The Expert Group has, *inter alia,* recommended re-schedulement of loans and waiver of interest in case of farmers affected by natural calamities and crop failure in case of rainfed areas with interest waiver to be shared by the Central and State Governments. The report of the Expert Group is in the public domain.

3. A scheme of debt waiver and debt relief for farmers has been announced by the Government in the Union Budget for 2008-09. The total value of overdue loans being waived is estimated at Rs. 50,000 crore and the One Time Settlement (OTS) relief on the overdue loans is estimated at Rs. 10,000 crore.

Climatic condition in Jharkhand for growing wheat

1578. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

whether the Jharkhand State has the critical component of excellent weather to grow the wheat;

whether Government has plan to encourage the tribal farmers to grow wheat in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor? THE **MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a)** Cool **and dry climatic conditions, soil texture and structure are, in general, suitable for wheat cultivation in the State. However, sometimes high temperature in last week of February to first week of March affects the flowering adversely. The major constraint in wheat production is the scarce availability of water for irrigation due to very less rainfall during October to February-March (20-30 mm per months) and very low irrigation potential (11-12 per cent only). Overall conditions barring water availability is suitable for wheat cultivation in the State.**

(b) to (d) A Centrally Sponsored Scheme Integrated Cereals Development Programme in Rice Based Cropping System Areas (ICDP-Rice) is in operation under Macro Management Programme through which assistance for critical inputs for wheat like seed, farm implements, moisture saving devices, demonstrations and training is provided to farmers including the tribal farmers to promote wheat cultivation in the State.

Pesticides Regulatory System

1579. SHRI EKANATH K.THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

whether iris a fact that India is losing agricultural production worth Rs. 1.48 lakh crores annually due to damage from pests, weeds and plant diseases;

whether it is also a fact that the current pesticides regulatory system had failed to check manufacturing, distribution and use of spurious and sub-standard pesticides, to the detriment of both the pesticides industry and the farmers; and

if so, the steps Government proposes to take to reduce the loss of agricultural production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. There are crop losses due to damage from pests, weeds and plant diseases, but Government of India through its various schemes take steps to contain these losses. However, there are estimates which indicate crop losses ranging from 10 to 30% of total crop production. The extent of crop losses depends upon various factors such as weather conditions, crop cultural practices etc.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. Insecticides Act, 1968, regulates import, manufacture, sale, transport and distribution of insecticides to prevent risk to human being and animals. Appropriate penal action is taken by the States, from time to time, against manufacturers of spurious products, under various provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968. Government of India is taking a number of steps to contain crop losses due to different pests and diseases. Under the scheme Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in the Country (SMPMA), the concept of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which is an eco-friendly approach to pest management, is propagated. Funds are provided to the State Governments for establishing and strengthening Bio Control and State Pesticides Testing Laboratories. 31 Central Integrated **Pest** Management Centres (CIPMCs) have been set up in various states, under the control of Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage, Faridabad, to popularize IPM by training farmers in the field through Farmers Field Schools. CIPMCs also take up pest surveillance based on which advisories are issued to farmers for Management of pests and diseases.

Dependency on Agriculture

1580. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the World Development Report, which says that three out of four people live in rural areas and 2.1 billion live on less than a dollar a day;